

From: RegComments@pa.gov
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2015 1:03 PM
To: Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; apankake@pasen.gov; IRRRC; RegComments@pa.gov; eregop@pahousegop.com; environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; gvitali@pahouse.net
Cc: ra-epmsdevelopment@pa.gov
Subject: Comment notice for - Advanced Notice of Final Rulemaking - Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites (7-484)



Re: Advanced Notice of Final Rulemaking - Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites (7-484)

The following comments have been received regarding the above-referenced advanced notice of final rulemaking.

Commentator Information:

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 IRRRC
 2015 APR 16 PM 3: 19

Comments entered:

The PA DEP has failed to do its job and protect the environment over the past decade as the Marcellus "rush" has occurred. This has been the biggest failure of PA state government in recent decades.

The Pennsylvania Constitution says
 "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people."
 but the DEP has failed to do its part in this. It's a clear case of regulatory capture.

Examples of the DEP failures I am alluding to:

- * failing to prevent pollution of residential water wells in Dimock, PA.
- * faulty well casings resulting in water contamination.
- * well water contamination in Donegal.
- * insufficient notification of the Department of Health.
- * radioactive wastewater spill in Josephine.
- * DEP suppression of water quality test results.
- * Hollowich family in Washington County subject to gag orders.
- * dumping of fracking wastewater into the Monongahela River for years, leading to elevated TDS.

- * water treatment plant in Warren PA not required to fix its frack wastewater treatment until 2016/1.
- * injection of frack wastewater (some it from PA?) resulting in earthquakes in Youngstown, OH.
- * failing to regularly remind the public that gas drilling is worse for the environment than coal, if it's not done right (e.g. due to methane being 100x more potent a greenhouse gas than CO2).

Browsing the regulations document, I have the following comments:

s78.52a:

- 1) 1000 feet is not enough buffer. Change it to 1 mile. Our understanding of what is going on underground is so limited that we need to be more cautious about potential leakage from new well bores for gas to old and abandoned water wells.
- 2) The wording says, essentially "check databases, old maps, and make an effort to ask landowners". That's not enough. Seismic mapping to locate abandoned wells in the area should be required, and all seismic data should be made public.

How the DEP should behave:

Communication with the public:

A web site and DEP public communication office should be created that enables the following capabilities to all members of the public:

1) Database of well pads, well bores (including laterals), pipelines, compressor stations, transportation routes for water and chemicals, companies involved in these activities, water intake and disposal (e.g. injection sites), and pollution events with spatial (mapping) and temporal records of all major activities. User interface must be top notch, like google earth.

Example query:

- * show me a list of all chemicals used for fracking in 2013 within 1 mile of Beaver Run Reservoir.
- * show me a map of train trips carrying more than 5 tank cars of fracking chemicals in Armstrong County in 2015.
- * show me a map of all pollution events in Westmoreland County, ranked by environmental risk.

2) Notification service: user outlines a geographic area of interest on a map and activities of interest (e.g. drilling, fracking, pipeline construction, venting) and submits an email address for notification. Examples:

- * email me when a well is drilled in Allegheny County.
- * email me when a well is fracked within 10 miles of Ligonier.
- * email me when a compressor station vents more than 1 cubic meter of VOC within ...

Education:

The DEP should have a relationship with every high school, so that chemistry, biology, and earth sciences classes are deputized as junior environmental monitors and inspectors to measure and graph air, water, and soil quality on a weekly basis, and keep an eye on industry and citizens make sure we're all protecting the environment, in keeping with the Pennsylvania Constitution.

My background: Former professor of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.